

and sisters after her mother died of cancer. Porsche's life ended tragically when her ex-boyfriend shot and killed her one year ago today. The 21-year-old gunman later shot and killed himself.

We cannot sit back and allow such senseless gun violence to continue. The deaths of these people are a reminder to all of us that we need to enact sensible gun legislation now.

NETWORKS FAILURE TO CARRY PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I rise today to express my displeasure and disappointment that two of the four major broadcast networks—NBC and Fox, have decided not to broadcast nationally, the presidential debate scheduled tonight between the Democratic and Republican candidates for President.

This election is likely to be among the closest national races in the last twenty years. In exchange for the use of spectrum without the imposition of a fee, broadcasters have to fulfill their public interest obligation. I do not believe it is too much to presume that showing vital news information such as a presidential debate is encompassed in a broadcaster's public interest obligation.

Instead of showing the debate, NBC is showing a divisional wildcard playoff baseball game, although they are apparently permitting their affiliates to broadcast the debate, if they so choose. Even more appalling, Fox is showing its new science fiction series produced by its own studio—Dark Angel—which I understand is particularly violent.

On Sunday, the Washington Post ran a story entitled—"Even Hits can Miss in TV's New Economy." That article outlined the enormous incentives the Networks have to air programs in which they possess a vested financial interest. I quote—

Just as a supermarket might reserve its best shelf space for its house brands, the networks have begun to favor their in house programs over shows created by others, which are often less profitable in the long term.

There it is Mr. President. Money trumps the political process once again. Fox has likely spent millions of dollars to develop and promote its new series, and NBC likely spent a significant amount of money to acquire the rights to broadcast a baseball playoff game. But Mr. President, when networks choose their own programming or sports programming over an event as significant as tonight's debate, they fail to meet their public interest obligation. Having to reschedule a baseball game or the debut of a new series created by their studios does not justify NBC or Fox precluding the public from having access to the presidential debates. I understand that one network, ABC, decided to postpone the debut of one of its new shows "Gideon's Crossing" by one night so as to air tonight's debate. That is called honoring your

public interest obligation. By choosing not to air the debates, these other networks have undermined the integrity of the political process and our democracy, and engaged in a disrespect of the American electorate.

The political process should be covered. The American people deserve such coverage. The grant of free spectrum worth billions of dollars to broadcasters comes with a public interest obligation that requires them to inform the public of issues of vital importance—not simply to do what is financially expedient.

OLDER AMERICANS ACT AMENDMENTS

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to be a cosponsor for the Older Americans Act Amendments of 1999, which would authorize and expand the programs first set up under the Older Americans Act of 1965.

The Older Americans Act authorizes a series of absolutely essential services for our country's seniors. Among others, the Act provides nutrition services, legal assistance, disease promotion, elder abuse prevention, employment assistance, and numerous informational programs, including the long-term care ombudsmen. There is hardly a senior in this country that is not touched, directly or indirectly, by one or more of the provisions of the Older Americans Act. These programs have become an integral part of the infrastructure that helps keep our most experienced citizens vital and constructive members of society.

I am particularly pleased that this bill includes a much-needed new service, the National Family Caregivers Program. The major medical advances of the past 50 years have led not only to an overall aging of the population but also to an increasing proportion of the elderly who are living with chronic diseases and disabilities. Many of these infirm elderly are cared for at home, putting a severe financial and emotional strain on family caregivers. This new program will provide such caregivers with a panoply of assistive services, including provision of information, assistance with access, counseling and training, respite care, and other supplemental services (home care, personal care, adult day care).

It is absolutely essential to assist caregivers as much as possible in order to allow our infirm seniors to maintain their autonomy and sense of self-worth, to permit them to live in the company of their loved ones and in the least restrictive environment compatible with their needs. This is what our seniors fervently desire and it is the right thing to do; the likelihood that such programs will save the government money in the long run is an added bonus.

There is little time left in this session of Congress, and there are many things that must be finished before adjournment. Yet as we struggle with our

workload, I hope we can take a few minutes to find a way to pass the Older Americans Act Amendments this year, on behalf of all of our older loved ones.

MEMPHIS POLICE DEPARTMENT AND AMERICA'S LAW ENFORCE- MENT OFFICIALS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, two years ago this revered but relatively insulated complex we affectionately call Capitol Hill was rocked by a lone gunman who shot his way through two security checkpoints and, in a rampage, not only terrorized tourists and staff but took the lives of two dedicated U.S. Capitol Police officers who died defending them and the institution in which we all serve.

As a trauma surgeon, I am used to blood and death, but it is one thing to treat the result of violence in a hospital; quite another to walk straight into its midst in a place you'd never expect. That day brought home not only at what great risk these dedicated police officers serve, but also how much we take their service—and their courage—for granted.

But the U.S. Capitol Police are not the only ones who deserve our respect and support. Every officer, in every city and town across America, who walks a beat, patrols a street, intercepts a drug push, responds to the call of an angry neighbor or spouse, or even pulls over a speeding motorist, runs the same risk of death or serious injury from spontaneous violence that Officers Chestnut and Gibson faced that day. Each of those officers deserve our thanks and admiration, but most of all, they deserve our support.

That is why I have consistently fought for more Federal block grant funds for local police departments, as well as the flexibility to use those funds wherever they're needed most—not just to hire more police officers, but to purchase the equipment or training they need to protect not only the lives of our citizens—which they are more than willing to do—but their own lives as well.

Three weeks ago, I had the honor of meeting with the Board of the Memphis Police Association in Memphis, Tennessee—a hard-working group of law enforcement officials who represent the 1,800 police men and women who respond to over 800,000 calls annually, protecting lives and property in Tennessee's largest city.

As always, they offered many constructive suggestions about how Congress might address a variety of law enforcement issues, including the issues of recruitment and quality of life. As the people who man the front lines in the war against crime and see first-hand the challenge that faces all of us, their perspective is invaluable, and I hope to translate some of their ideas into legislation for the Senate's consideration next year.

One of the advantages of being a U.S. Senator is the opportunity to undergo